

**MINUTES
STATE PRESERVES ADVISORY BOARD
DOROTHY PECAUT NATURE CENTER
SIOUX CITY, IOWA
July 28, 2000**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Lyle Asell
Neil Bernstein
Robin Fortney
Kathy Gourley
Gary Phillips, Chairperson
Timothy Sproul
Lois Tiffany

ADVISORS PRESENT

Rebecca Conard
Shirley Schermer

ADVISORS ABSENT

Dorothy Baringer
Diane Ford-Shivvers
Robert McKay
Jan Nash
Daryl Smith

STAFF PRESENT

Daryl Howell
John Pearson
Steve Pennington
Jim Zohrer

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Gary Phillips called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

APPROVE AGENDA

The following adjustments were made to the agenda:

Delete: - Item 12 - White Pine Hollow Management Plan - Defer to October Meeting

Motion was made by Robin Fortney to approve agenda as amended. Seconded by Neal Bernstein. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVE MINUTES

The following changes were made to the April 25th, 2000 meeting minutes:

Page 11 "plat plan" was changed to "Bill Platt Plan."

Motion was made by Lois Tiffany to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Kathy Gourley. Motion carried unanimously.

EQUESTRIAN USE ON PRESERVES

Chairman Gary Phillips stated it had been reported him after the April meeting that there was horseback riding taking place on Cayler Prairie. A subsequent investigation revealed that an individual from Minnesota had established a riding stable near the prairie. This person's plan was to utilize DNR lands along the Little Sioux River in the Twin Forks area, the addition to Cayler Prairie and Cayler Prairie itself. This area had been posted limiting equestrian use, however, Chairman Phillips explained, horseback riding was not prohibited, only limited in preserve areas. Current rules state that a permit must be obtained if there are more than four riders. The person who had the stable was aware of this rule and had planned to send his riders through in groups of four.

Daryl Howell said the horses did not, in fact, go on to the Cayler Prairie, but the concern was that they would start spreading out. As an added concern he noted, during nesting season no horses were allowed on wildlife areas.

Neal Bernstein said horses do a tremendous amount of erosion damage and they introduce invasive non-native plants into the areas through their feces.

Timothy Sproul asked if we had management plans restricting the use of horses on all of our preserves.

Daryl Howell reported not all preserves had management plans, however those who did not, had rules of management, which prohibits equestrian use.

Discussion followed regarding whether the board had the authority to change the current rules.

Daryl Howell explained the board could go through the rule making process, which involves filing a notice of intended action and opening it up for public comment.

Discussion followed regarding the best course of action for restricting equestrian use on preserves.

Gary Phillips said the best way to handle this situation was to ensure that all future management plans include a statement of not allowing horseback riding and modifying existing management plans that do not specifically exclude horseback riding.

Motion was made by Neal Bernstein to prohibit horseback riding on all preserves in all future management plans and to modify existing management plans to include that language. Kathy Gourley seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

FORT ATKINSON FIELD SCHOOL

Rebecca Conrad distributed registration forms and a copy of the original proposal that had been presented to the board two years prior. She explained that due to extenuating circumstances they had not been able to hold the Field School this year. She stated that the original intent was to provide for the collection of research data on archeology and history for our preserves. She added that this type of data collection is very labor intensive and expensive and that the State Preserves Advisory Board did not in fact have the budget to do this type of research. The second part of the original intent was to provide public education. She stated that by choosing Fort Atkinson for the location they thought it would be a good opportunity for involvement with Winnebago/Hochunk tribal members in site research and interpretation. She stated that the school was cancelled due to lack of enrollees. Rebecca Conrad informed the board that the planning committee met on July 11, 2000 to review the problems and mistakes of the enrollment process she listed the problems as follows:

- The time demands of coordinating and organizing the field school exceed the availability of any and all the planning team members.
- Too little advance information and much of it disseminated too late
- Schedule dates (July 9-14) fell too late in the summer to attract teachers, who prefer to take continuing education courses immediately following the school year
- Registration fees (\$250 for field school + 285 for 3 units of college credit) were too high for teachers

Rebecca Conrad stated that if the board wished to offer the field school again in 2001 the committee offers the following recommendations:

- A staff person either from the DNR or the DNR fund to coordinate the logistics and publicity, preferably from a central location.

- Schedule it earlier, they are looking at the dates of June 10-15 or June 17-22.
- Need to produce another brochure and begin distribution of it in September.
- Reduction of registration fee through student scholarships.

Lengthy discussion followed regarding the budget issues for the field school.

Motion was made Robin Fortney that the Board support the Cultural Resources Management Field School and to request that the DNR would support the grant writing efforts and provide some staff hours for coordinating logistics and publicity efforts. Seconded by Neil Bernstein. Motion carried unanimously.

BUDGET FY 2001 AND BUDGET REQUESTS - FY 2001

Daryl Howell informed the board due to the approval of research and inventory grants; the 2001 budget had been spent. He stated that the budget was tighter than what they had originally planned for, therefore the interpretive signs the board had requested for the preserves would not be affordable this year.

Interim Director of the Department of Natural Resources Lyle Asell said we did not lose any money in our budget for 2001 but we did not gain much either. For the 2002 budget the Governor has said to expect a flat budget and that any requests for additional funding would need to be offset by 50% through alternate funding. Lyle explained the procedure for presenting issues and budget items to the Governor through the Enterprise Planning Teams. The Department chaired the Environmental Enterprise Planning Team and their goals were as follows:

- Conserve and improve Iowa's water resources
- Encourage all Iowans to serve as stewards of natural and cultural resources
- Protect, restore, and enhance Iowa management resources to ensure a sustainable environment for high quality outdoor recreation
- Increase environmentally sustainable business practices
- Promote the wise use of energy.

Interim Director Asell explained that under each of those goals the Environmental Enterprise Planning Team developed a number of initiatives to achieve them. He reviewed a number of the initiatives for the board.

Neil Bernstein asked if the Department had plans to hire additional staff to do the natural area inventory and invasive species.

Lyle said we had proposed to hire four full time employees to handle those tasks.

Jim Zohrer said some of the largest increases of full time employees was proposed by the Fish and Wildlife Division, adding approximately 20 private lands biologists across the state and somewhere between 20 to 24 staff to do interpretive work on private and public land.

Discussion followed about the funding of those full time employees.

Gary Phillips asked the board if anyone had any input for the 2002 budget.

Discussion followed regarding who determines the budget and if the board could be informed of the amount of money they had to spend so that they could set priorities for those monies.

Motion was made by Neil Bernstein that any requests for new full time employees responsible for natural areas inventory be placed in the State Preserves Advisory Board budget as opposed to the general division budget. Seconded by Tim Sproul.

Tim Sproul said the Preserves Board does not have a budget that is separate from the DNR Parks Bureau. He suggested that the State Preserves Advisory Board develop a line-item budget that spells out what they would like to have funding for, and submit it to the Parks Division for inclusion in their budget requests.

Neil Bernstein withdrew his motion.

Discussion followed regarding whether or not the State Preserves Advisory Board should be broke down into its own cost center and how the budget process works.

Lois Tiffany asked if the board should request a modest increase in the research funding.

Lyle Asell asked if they were leveraging those funds in any way. He explained that any new requests or requests for additional money should show that those funds are being leveraged.

Discussion followed regarding leverage options.

Gary Phillips summarized the discussion:

- The members would like to receive a breakdown of the money allocated for the State Preserves Advisory Board for next year's budget meeting.
- The requests for the 2002 budget are as follows:
 - Modest increase in the research monies, from \$27,000 to \$30,000.
 - Funding for two interpretive signs in the amount of \$5,000

- Designated Preserves Manager/Coordinator position.
- Funding of \$2,000 for printing
- Funding for Public Outreach programs in the amount of \$3,000

Motion was made by Lois Tiffany to approve the above mentioned bulleted items. Seconded by Robin Fortney. Motion carried unanimously.

PRESERVES MANAGEMENT PLANS

The need to complete a management plan before an area is dedicated as a preserve has reduced misunderstandings between the board, managers, and owners of preserves. However it has also slowed the pace of dedication of the new preserves. Current staff resources are not sufficient to complete the backlog of existing preserves without preserve management plans. Staff recommends that the board consider a streamlined format of the current preserve management plan rather than increasing the effort to complete the plans for new preserves.

Discussion followed regarding the amount of information required in the preparation of the current management plans.

The board requested that DNR staff bring ideas for the revision of the management plan to the next meeting, including a time table mechanism to ensure that all of the components are included in the plan, as well as what information is readily available on the internet or other resources.

CHEEVER LAKE

Instead of constructing a new outlet structure, a plan to monitor water levels at Cheever Lake has been developed. Gauges will be installed this year and recorded for several years. An informed decision can then be made in the future about the need for an outlet.

John Pearson and Ken Herring met with the land owners around Cheever Lake, who were very concerned about the possibility that the outlet of Cheever Lake was being manipulated to hold high water on the property and cause the water level to be held above the ordinary water mark. It became very clear that there was a lot of disagreement and misinterpretation as to where the water level was at any one point. Upon investigation it was found that a beaver had built a dam in one of the ditches that one property owners tiles drained into causing the water to back up at his tiles. The water levels will be monitored with the use of gauges over the next two years to determine whether or not an outlet structure needed to be built.

PLANNING CALENDAR

The Board approved a planning calendar at the January meeting and several action items from the strategic plan need to be included in the calendar.

Daryl Howell explained to the board that there had been a few changes made to the calendar that they had approved in January, he asked them to review the changes and make a decision as to whether or not they approved it.

Motion was made by Neil Bernstein to approve the calendar as amended. Seconded by Kathy Gourley. Motion carried unanimously.

WHITE PINE HOLLOW

Dr. Larkin Powell, from the University of Dubuque, request permission to leave the sheet metal cover boards for an additional year to inventory the preserve for snakes.

Daryl Howell explained to the Board that Dr. Larkin Powell had not had a lot of success with his reptile study, but would like to leave the cover boards out for an additional year to continue with the study. He reported that the DNR had received some comments from the public who mistook the cover boards as trash.

Motion was made by Neil Bernstein to allow the cover boards to remain for one additional year. Seconded by Lois Tiffany. Motion carried unanimously.

REQUEST TO COLLECT REGAL FRITILLARY BUTTERFLIES

Dr. Diane Debinski requests permission to collect two female Regal Fritillary butterflies from Cayler, Kalsow and Anderson Prairies, for a total of six butterflies. The butterflies will be used for a reintroduction program at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge.

Daryl Howell said Diane Debinski from Iowa State University has been working with staff over at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge to reintroduce Regals to the refuge, they have planted violets there for the past three or four years and are now requesting to take a couple of the Regal butterflies from each of three preserves. They have promised not to take any female butterflies off the preserve unless they see a population of least fifty.

Motion was made by Neil Bernstein to allow the removal of the six female Regal Fritillary butterflies. Seconded by Robin Fortney. Motion carried unanimously.

PRAIRIE SEED HARVEST

Wildlife Bureau staff will update the Board on plans for seed harvest in 2000. All harvesting will be hand collecting at Doolittle, Hayden, Kalsow, Rolling Thunder, and Steele Prairies.

Jim Zohrer from the Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Bureau informed the Board that the DNR had recently hired Bill Johnson, a seed harvest biologist. The plan for this current year is to add two technicians and a summer person to the seed harvest staff. The first job that Bill Johnson will be carrying out is to prepare a master plan for seed harvest around the state. Jim Zohrer stated this year's seed harvest request would be similar to last year's request. The request is to hand harvest seed from select preserves. Work crews from the Department of Correction supervised by the DNR staff will be used to hand collect seed. All of this seed will be used to augment seeding for additional seeding on state lands. A very small amount will be used in propagation greenhouses for plugs to produce plots, to produce more seed to be used on state areas. The long term direction for seed harvest is to establish several greenhouses around the state, and the Department of Corrections is very interested in participating in this program.

Discussion followed regarding the thoroughness of hand seed harvest followed.

Motion was made by Tim Sproul to approve the hand harvesting of seed in the selected prairies. Seconded by Robin Fortney. Motion carried unanimously.

RESEARCH AND INVENTORY STUDIES

Final reports for studies completed last fiscal year have been received. Staff is reviewing the reports and copies will be provided to board members. All contracts have been signed for the current fiscal year.

Daryl Howell distributed a copy of the various reports asked the board to put their name on the back of the reports that they wanted copies of. He said he would contacting some of the researchers would come to the January meeting to present their findings.

John Pearson reviewed the details of the 30-year resurvey of the Kalsow Prairie. The study found that the prairie is in some respects in better condition now than in the initial study, which was done shortly after Kalsow became a preserve.

Tim Sproul asked if we require a summary abstract on the reports that we receive.

Daryl Howell replied that we did not but probably should.

John Pearson said the DNR would make it a requirement for future studies.

NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY

The Board discussed the need to revitalize the inventory at previous meetings to fulfill its duties as listed in the Code. A symposium is being planned in conjunction with the Iowa Academy of Science meeting next April in Des Moines to provide information about inventor needs and to garner support for the program.

Gary Phillips said the symposium, which had been initially scheduled for the fall, had been delayed until spring of 2001. The board discussed the possibility of scheduling it to run in conjunction with the Iowa Academy of Science meeting, which is held in April. Mr. Phillips has since spoken to the Iowa Academy of Science and has received their approval to pursue this. He said if the Board wished to move ahead with this it would be held in the city of Des Moines.

Lyle Asell mentioned that the Natural Areas Inventory sounded very similar to the Governor's symposium on protected landscapes, but the one other issue the Governor wanted to add was invasive species. Lyle said there might be a possibility of tying these two events together.

Lengthy discussion followed.

Gary Phillips stated in order to pursue this farther, a subcommittee should be established, he volunteered to serve and would contact Diane Ford-Shivvers about serving as well.

Neil Bernstein and Robin Fortney volunteered to serve on the committee.

ROCK ISLAND PRESERVE

The IDOT is planning to construct an extension of Highway 100 near the preserve. The Board toured the preserve and the adjacent area last July. There was a meeting on July 6 to discuss the status of the project and the status of studies being conducted.

Daryl Howell reported the DNR had met with the Department of Transportation (DOT) on the proposed highway that would go right by the preserve. Although the highway would not come into the preserve there was some concern about the close proximity to the highway and what the potential problems would be. The DOT presented information on the hydrology of the area, their initial studies indicate that there would be no effect. The County Conservation Board was concerned about the issue of butterflies. The DOT hired Mr. Frank Olson to do some surveys along the right of way and on the preserve regarding that issue. They are hoping this will help them to decide what type of vegetative screens might be helpful.

Neil Bernstein said they had proposed a concrete barrier between the highway and the prairie to reduce the noise and run a bike nature trail along the edge of the prairie.

Daryl Howell said he thought the DOT was still considering that possibility. He stated he would continue to keep the Board updated on the progress of this project.

ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan for the Strategic Plan was included for review. The Board will discuss and finalize the Action Plan

Gary Phillips explained that these were the action steps for the strategic plan that they had been working on for two years. This is the part of the plan that will be used as a working document for the Board to utilize the strategic plan. He said he had reviewed the document thoroughly and the only thing he could see that needed to be added was in section two D, E, and F should have a second task that indicates the follow through of the long range plan.

Discussion followed regarding the specific items of the Action Plan.

Gary Phillips suggested that because the Board has as part of its calendar that they review the Strategic Plan annually, they move to approve the action steps as we have them and recognizing that they are a dynamic system that will change annually, rather than try to fine tune things anymore than they already have.

<i>Motion was made by Neil Bernstein to approve the Action Plan as amended. Seconded by Robin Fortney. Motion carried unanimously.</i>

SHEEDER PRAIRIE

The Nature Conservancy Intern crew assisted DNR staff in removing trees from land adjacent to Sheeder Prairie on July 12.

John Pearson thanked the Nature Conservancy for their efforts.

Robin Fortney asked how the support from Nature Conservancy acknowledged.

John Pearson stated some of the ways in the past was to publicly acknowledge their effort in the minutes and to allow free camping at the state parks.

Robin Fortney suggested the possibility of acknowledging their help in the Conservationist.

Tim Sproul informed the Board that although the interns are working for the Nature Conservancy, and they have had work crew projects for many years, this year that project is being significantly funded by the Loess Hills Alliance Organization. Therefore the

Alliance put money into the Nature Conservancy to enlarge the work crews, and they have been concentrating their efforts on prairie restoration work in the Loess Hills region.

LAMSON WOODS

Update on the improvement of a trail through the north edge of the preserve.

John Pearson said the city decided to build a bike trail system in and around the city of Fairfield, which partially effects the Lamson Woods State Preserve. Lamson Woods is within the city limits of Fairfield, inside of the preserve there is a series of foot trails. There is also a creek that runs through the preserve and a mowed lawn area that is used as a parking lot. To get from the parking lot to the trails there is a boardwalk that crossed the creek. This boardwalk has become very old and dilapidated over the past years and the city wants to replace it, make it a little wider to accommodate the bicycle traffic as well as the foot traffic. There will be a gate and signage that prevent bicycles from going onto the foot trails.

Discussion followed regarding the specific construction details.

Motion was made by Lois Tiffany to approve the plans for the foot bridge replacement. Seconded by Robin Fortney.

Discussion followed regarding notification of the near by residents that the National Guard will be doing the project.

Motion carried unanimously

DNR STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Department has initiated the strategic planning process.

Lyle Asell stated the DNR has put together five or six goals to work on the major issues. They are trying to put together a long-term process to connect people to the environment. They will be talking about connecting the dots a lot more, such as if you are working for wildlife habitat, you are probably helping to improve water quality, and might be sequestering carbon. They are going to try to have better interaction between the different segments of the DNR. They do not have a strategic plan at this point, but they are working on the process. He stated the most important assets the DNR has are the highly dedicated employees and he believes that they are not told often enough. He said he believes there are a lot of managers that have moved from the technical ranks, who are still very technical while their job is now management, he said he thought we could do a better job at training them to manage people.

OPEN DISCUSSION

No subjects brought up.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on the morning of Friday, October 20th, 2000, in Fairfield.
The tour will be held on the afternoon of Thursday, October 19th, 2000.

BOARD TOUR

The board toured Mount Talbot State Preserve and the Nature Conservancy's Broken Kettle Grassland on Thursday, July 27, 2000.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the State Preserves Advisory Board, Chairperson Gary Phillips adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m., Thursday, July 27, 2000.

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